

Definitions



- **Program:** Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state, and national levels for study and action.
- **Position:** Achieving a position begins with member interest in a public policy issue. A statement of the League’s point of view on an issue is arrived through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the general membership and/or appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.
- **Consensus:** Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.
- **Concurrence:** Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.
- **Principles:** Government standards and policies supported by League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of Program at all levels.
- **Action:** Advocating and lobbying for League’s positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media, and the public.

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy is a broader concept than lobbying. Advocacy activities are often considered “educational.” There are cases when only one side of an issue is presented because no action on a piece of legislation is requested. Such activities can include:

- Developing public policy briefs that analyze issues
- Providing detailed information and recommendations for addressing issues through specific reforms
- Providing forums for discussing issues
- Educating policymakers and the public

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Speaking in support of LWV is also advocating, i.e., for the overall cause of our organization.

Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation:

- Legislation that has been introduced
- Legislation that has been proposed

Lobbying includes actions that transmit a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs, as well as action urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation. It also includes communications to the general public expressing a view on specific referenda or other ballot measures.

Actions are fundamental to the League's mission to encourage informed citizen participation in government and influence public policy. Actions may also energize membership, promote visibility in the community, and attract new members. Local Leagues generally decide on positions for focus of their efforts on an annual or semiannual basis. Local Leagues are not expected to act on all positions but focus on those that are the most timely, relevant, and compelling for their area, member interests, and member expertise. Members may act in the name of LWVNC only when authorized to do so by the LWVNC Board. When acting on state government issues local Leagues must act in conformity with the positions of LWVNC and/or LWVUS. Local Leagues may find it useful to have joint activities with neighboring Leagues and are encouraged to publicize activities of other Leagues. Local Leagues are encouraged to share ideas, success stories, and lessons learned. For regional issues it is important that local Leagues have a coordinated and consistent effort.

LWVNC positions that follow have been developed over many years. These position statements begin with member interest and study. If there is sufficient member interest, a study committee is formed by the LWVNC board and information is gathered on all sides of an issue. The study committee educates members and develops consensus questions. If consensus is reached on the issue, the committee develops a position statement to be adopted. These position statements are reaffirmed and updated at LWVNC biennial conventions. LWVNC updates its Public Policy Positions in the odd numbered years as part of the convention process. A local League, group of members, or an individual member should be ready to submit proposed additions/deletions/changes in January of the odd numbered year.